

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-10 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 DRC-01 /138 W

----- 047492

R 090740Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1696

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0346

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR NI ET SU SO

SUBJ: ETHIOPIA-SOMALIA DISPUTE

REF: LAGOS 1924

1. WE HAVE NOT HEARD OF ANY PLANS BY PRESIDENT SIAD TO DECLINE OAU CHAIRMANSHIP TO KEEP HIS HAND FREE IN DISPUTE WITH ETHIOPIA. WHILE WE AND OUR DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES HERE WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE PRIVY TO ANY GSDR PLAN OF THIS KIND, WE THINK IT QUITE UNLIKELY THAT SIAD SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING THIS COURSE.

2. OAU CHAIRMANSHIP VERY IMPORTANT TO GSDR. LATTER IS SOMEWHAT ISOLATED IN AFRICA AND, WITH ITS RECENT ACCESSION TO ARAB LEAGUE, LIKES TO STRESS ITS ROLE AS BRIDGE BETWEEN AFRICANS AND ARABS. PRESTIGE ATTENDANT UPON CHAIRMANSHIP WILL BE MOST WELCOME TO GSDR AND SIAD PERSONALLY. GSDR PROBABLY ALSO FEELS CHAIRMANSHIP WOULD GIVE IT ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION FROM WHICH TO GAIN MORE AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR ITS VIEWPOINT ON SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN DIFFERENCES AND TO EMPHASIZE AFRICAN TIES TO THOSE WHO CRITICIZE ARAB LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP. MOREOVER, SOMALIA HAS WORKED HARD TO GET IN FOREFRONT OF AFRICAN DIPLOMACY--MOGADISCIO DECLARATION
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OF OCT. 1971, MEDIATION IN UGANDA-TANZANIA DISPUTE, INTENSE

DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY WITH FELLOW OAU MEMBERS PRIOR TO TENTH SUMMIT LAST SUMMER.

3. WE CONTINUE DOUBT THAT GSDR WILL LAUNCH MAJOR MILITARY ACTION TO RESOLVE SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE BY MILITARY MEANS IN ABSENCE VIRTUAL DISINTEGRATION OF ETHIOPIAN STATE. RE-STRRAINTS IMPOSED ON SOMALIA BY ITS ROLE AS OAU CHAIRMAN WOULD PALE INTO INSIGNIFICANCE IN FACE OF SUCH A MAJOR ALTERATION IN BALANCE OF FORCES IN EAST AFRICA. CURRENT SOMALI POSTURE IS ONE OF DEDICATION TO PEACEFUL MEANS TO RESOLVE DISPUTE AND WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH OAU RECONCILIATION COMMISSION - THUS GSDR ACTED UNTIL VERY LAST MINUTE AS IF GOWON WAS COMING TO MOGADISCIO, DECKED CITY OUT WITH FLAGS AND RAN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES WELCOMING HIS MISSION. SOMALI PROPAGANDA MEDIA HAVE TAKEN SELF-CONSCIOUSLY "CORRECT" ATTITUDE ABOUT CURRENT ETHIOPIAN DISTURBANCES AND HAVE REACTED INDIGNANTLY TO ANY SUGGESTION THAT SOMALIA HAS ATTEMPTED TO PROFIT BY ETHIOPIA'S PRESENT DIFFICULTIES.

4. ACCEPTANCE OF OAU CHAIRMANSHIP THUS VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH SOMALIA'S OVERALL STRATEGY AND CURRENT TACTICAL POSTURE IN ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE.
KIRK

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